

Soulless Nation

(America 2000...)

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America

Land of the selfish
and the proud.

Land of self-indulgence
and of greed,
whose only need
is more.

More things to satisfy
your unending desire.

What will fill the hole
that was once your soul?

Will they but say:

“For a moment she shone
but the light soon faded
away”?

Like all the others,
will you become
a decaying page
in a worthless book?
Or will you find your soul once more?

Our Lady of Guadalupe,
pray for us.

O Immaculate Conception,
watch over our ways.

Ghost Town

When I was a child
these streets were alive
with children playing.

In the houses there were mothers
watching us from the windows
as they prepared the evening meal.

My father stood on the porch at dinner time
and whistled,
and from the park we'd come
rushing home.
Never late.

But now a child is not heard:
there is no movement on these streets,
and the houses are empty.

The neighborhood is filled
with those who stay a year or two,
maybe three,
as they milk money
from the big City across the way.

Soon they will be gone to another house
for a year or two...
No roots.
No roots, no branches, no leaves...
No roots – no tree.
Four walls, empty.
Four walls: a vacuum.

And they do not seem to mind
that they have no home,
no children – well, maybe one,
despite the houses they own.

(What makes them so diligent in their pursuit?)

The womb, our first home,
that place of sacred wonder,
no longer brings life;
yes, it
is empty.

Four walls: a vacuum.
Empty.

A third of a generation has never been,
and no one seems to notice;
no one seems to care.
The loss is hardly felt
as we celebrate our freedom
in this
ghost town.

Soulless Nation

In this land God is dead,
in this land where money is king.
Here we worship the works of our hands
and not Him in whose Hand
rests everything.

In this land we kill
the child in the womb
rather than face the life
that would have been.

In this land our children cannot pray
in the houses in which we school them.
In this land God's name must not be mentioned,
must not be taught or called upon.

In this land "In God We Trust" is written,
not on our hearts,
but on our dollar bills
alone.

In this land we eat and drink
and seek ever to be merry.
In this land we presume peace
even as we reach in vain
for a drug to mask our fears.

In this land our bodies are but machines
"hooking up" with others'.
And the new life made despite our blindness
becomes collateral damage of reticent mothers.

In this land it is better to die
than to live without our comforts;
sympathy is not known
in a land where humans
are but facile tools.

To this land the nations come
to gather cash,
and soon find they too
have lost their hearts, their souls.

In this land we have no faith,
we have no loyalty.
We divorce our wives, we leave our jobs...
it is a transient family.

In this land there is emptiness,
there is a hollow sound
echoing in our skulls and lungs –
what name does it speak?

And so, as our parents rot in nursing homes,
as our children are torn limb from limb
within our wombs,
where can our soul be said to be?
Here where we love no one but ourselves alone
and the green George Washington.

Here we live in Babylon,
calling it the Promised Land.
How long can the ruse go on?
How long before we find we cannot clean
the blood from our soiled hands?

Cry, America!

Cry, America,
for the blood of the innocents
is upon your hands!

Cry, America,
and join Rachel
weeping for her children!

Cry, America,
for those who are trained to save
are murdering instead!

Cry, for those
whose brains are sucked dry,
whose limbs are torn apart,
whose lives are denied,

cannot cry for themselves –
nor can they cry for you
who have lost your soul in violence!

Save us, O Lord,
from a fate worse than death;
save us from our inhumanity.

What life is there upon these shores
if we do not cry
for what is lost?

Christ was once crucified;
the innocent Lamb of God
has died for our sins
once and for all –

yet He suffers repeated crucifixion
in the slaughter of the innocents
and the hardness of our hearts.

Should we not cry
for the four thousand souls
killed each day
in the womb?
Should we not cry
for the nations
we lead astray
with a freedom that reeks of license,
license to do as we please
in lust, in greed, in pride?

Has this nation not become blind
to the corruption it breeds
in its schools
and in its halls
of justice?
Here is a pretense of compassion
for the children
who wander aimlessly
our city streets
or suffer and die
before being born.

Here there is no life, no love,
no land that God may bless.

Do you not know that pride is a deadly sin?

It kills the life of the soul
as surely as toxic gases
asphyxiate the lungs.

It so inflates the spirit
as to make it unable
to see beyond the nose
of its face.

And so we care for no one but ourselves.

Though we be rich in material goods,
how poor indeed we are at heart,
for we believe the lie
that these are our own,
that what pittance we give
is charity,

when all it is
is more food for the pride
that inflates our souls.

And so how tragically we shall choke,
unable to breathe anymore...

unless, of course, we turn
and humble ourselves
before the Lord.

But how can we?

It is not by planes flown into towers

that America will become humble before
God.

It is not bombs that teach
the ways of the Lord
but love,
for love is of God;
for God is love.

And so those who come with anger
and condemnation
are just as guilty
as those who sin without compunction,
as those whose greed and lust
rule their days
and their television screens.

For these are just as far
from the love of God
and His holy Word.

Only by love,
only by Jesus,
only by the Christ
can man be redeemed;
and so the leader of nations
is no different,
is just the same.

It is December 9, the anniversary of the appearance of Our Lady to Juan Diego. It is, of course, Our Lady of Guadalupe – whose feast we celebrate in three days – who is Patroness of the Americas, as well as Protectress of the Unborn. Yesterday we celebrated the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Patroness of the United States. So, surrounded by such blessed feasts, it seems only right to begin this work proper.

The previous pieces may be seen as introductory to the body of the text; they are rather unconnected expressions of a sense that this country, though giving the appearance of health, wealth, and vitality, is and has been dying, eaten out from the inside by a certain immorality that has caused its reason to fail and its courage to become almost nonexistent.

Juan Diego was, we know, a humble child of God. Though a recent convert, his faith was strong and his heart right with God. Thus did our Mother appear to him – since she is only seen by the merest children.

How like Juan Diego the people of this nation need to become! How lacking in his humility are we all! And so this work is offered up as a prayer, in hopes that again a genuine conversion might come to this land, and it might be a light to the nations.

Today is the Feast of Our Lady Guadalupe, the Patroness of the Americas and Protectress of the Unborn. Is it not an appropriate day to be writing of the sins of this country?

I saw a report on television last night about Mexican immigrants' attempts to enter this country and the means being used to stop them. It is a particularly sad and absurd story.

Since walls were constructed to prevent their free passage in and around major cities, the number of immigrants has only increased, but now hundreds are dying each year in the desert they must now traverse – a five or six day journey by foot.

The quote from a young man caught and being sent back sums up the absurdity of the situation: in tears he stated that he is not coming to do anything bad, only to work; yet fleeing the utter poverty of his homeland for the potential ability to support himself and his family is seen as a crime.

And, of course, the key to the absurdity is that without these immigrants working for low wages at difficult jobs no one else can fill, the economy of the country would virtually collapse.

So, we in this nation of plenty refuse to share even in the most minimal of ways with those who are instrumental in making us rich. Could there be a greater evil, a greater greed – and a greater foolishness?

And so these souls continue to die in the desert as we eat of the fat of the land they tend.

It was five years ago this day that our current president finally found victory in an election that was severely disputed for more than five weeks, as the Supreme Court declared that the contention could not go on beyond this date – the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

It seemed providential at the time, since the president-elect professed to be particularly pro-life and his opponent was strictly in favor of abortion on demand (a scenario repeated in his reelection). It seemed as if the hand of our Mother was pitying this lost land and serving to guide it toward a renewal.

There have been certain strides in the past five years, and there is still hope that the movement toward the rejection of abortion as an answer to problems will continue and grow... but as I sit here before the Lord, there are still four thousand or more lives destroyed in the womb each day in the name of freedom.

This is a pool of blood that rises unto heaven and serves to mock the God most citizens would call upon for blessings. Yet most remain ignorant of the carnage, not caring to face this national abomination, busy as they are shopping for the latest products on the market.

As said before, the reckoning for such sin will not come by planes flown into towers, be they towers representing the world economy or not – yet the reckoning will come by the hand of God if we persist in refusal to turn from this horror. How much carnage can He watch?

Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us.

On this the feast of St. John of the Cross, we think of the silence of the Lord and how that reverent quiet is missing from a land that should know it well. Instead, there is only noise, the noise of man's machines, which he exalts above all else.

How can we hear God speaking when such noise pervades our days and nights and weekends. It seems never ending, the unholy chattering and clattering of devices cluttering the lives of those in this vast country. The wind cannot speak to us; the rivers, polluted as they are, do not call our names... the earth which once breathed with the Lord's primordial blessing is now muted by our passions, our desire for the things of this world.

And who needs God anymore? we say with our lives. Traveling along upon the treadmill, ignorant of His grace, we think all is well – we have the security of insurance and inflated bank accounts, do we not? What more is needed to bring us comfort and peace?

But God's peace is not in these things. These things which soon pass away serve only to distract us from true peace, for we do not keep them in their place.

All is passing; be attached to none of it. Only God remains – seek his face.

But such talk falls on deaf ears in this generation preoccupied with what it can buy and exploit. Who would turn his heart to the whisper of the Lord?

And thus, can souls so deaf to the voice of the Lord be saved? Can they prosper long? If they have no hearing, who will teach them, and so how can they turn and be saved? Will they not continue in their ignorance toward the destruction they sow day to day?

And if they turn to a silence, it is one quite vain, one wherein they hear only their own voice speaking – one which speaks of the goodness of the pleasure they may know. They will not hear of suffering; any mention of pain frightens them... and the thought of penance they find quite absurd.

Only happiness do they desire, comfort in the lives they make for their own sakes. Of others they rarely think; sacrifice of self is foreign to their way, unless, of course, it brings them adulation – then a measure, and only a measure, will they practice.

But the least thing they do, the smallest alms they give, seems so great in their sight that they offer as close to nothing as one can – less than nothing if one considers the vanity it breeds in them.

And so, empty they are. As we say, even their silence is empty, their worship quite in vain. They know not God or His love, His Cross, and therefore deaf they indeed remain. What hope is there left for them...? Will the Lord's voice penetrate such a wall?

Is this land in which we dwell not the home of the Red man? Is it not he who is native to this place? And so, what can we do, who have come so late here; how shall our spirit match his own?

There is something in the nature of the man of the West that is attuned to the winds of the sky and the life they breathe into the soul. But how can we who have come from the land of the North, who are by nature more physical than spiritual, have affinity with this place we have come to dwell?

It is true that the souls that once dwelt here in the Americas erred greatly in their spiritual ways – sacrificing even children in the fire, so blind to the transcendent God. Yet have we not also grown blind to the Spirit and the Son; and do we not now sacrifice our children on the unholy altar of abortion (in the name of freedom), destroying more lives than the primitive souls approached?

It was well that the peoples of the West were converted – though this was done principally by the Mother of God. But now what shall become of them and us, as it seems an inherent brokenness now plagues all? Where do we turn for help? How shall we find health?

Christ alone is the Savior, for all peoples, for every soul. And so let every soul turn to Him, and all peoples give what He blesses us with to the upbuilding of all men.

In this land there are indeed a number of peoples of many nations. In this land the four corners of the earth gather to live. But for what do they gather? What is their purpose here? Is it not upon each one's heart to serve money and not God?

This could be a gathering of all God's children; it could be a sign of His kingdom. But instead, that which directs all souls is the world and not heaven.

And though there are many religions that come to this place, and though all these be welcomed in grace, yet is this land not greatly Christian? And is there any other religion that will accept others as she?

Yet we hide our faith, and in the process serve to diminish the faith of all, for a land wherein God's name cannot be spoken freely is not a land welcoming to any who believe.

Thus but idols do we erect, idols made in our own image. Knowledge and worship of God is so far removed that He cannot find a space in which to dwell. We have squeezed Him out of our houses and our hearts.

Let all the peoples come to Him who has created them all. Here let them find a land of hope, of opportunity for the grace of the Savior to fill their hearts and fulfill their lives with His blessings.

But how can the Lord bless those who are not obedient to His voice? Is not obedience thought of as the most worthless of attributes in this place? Yet is it not what the Lord God desires most? And so, what hope is there for those who listen to no one but themselves?

Love is necessary, yes. But what excuses and what sins, what abominations are wrought in the name of love in this land! For who can know love who does not know God? God is love and He alone. None of us knows love, therefore. But how we think we do! How those who listen not for the voice of God define love for themselves so freely, and so, grievously fall into error, into sin.

The word “obedience” means to listen, to hear and heed. How often the Lord calls us to obedience in His sacred Word. It is the prophets’ constant theme. But, again, how ignored is this call; and apart from the Lord’s commandment, how we fall.

Be obedient. Hear and heed the command of the Lord. Hear the Word of God and keep it. Then you will be enabled to love; otherwise, you shall only be lost.

First is obedience, yes. For first is silence and the Cross. We are here not for comfort and for peace but for repentance and conversion, for the carrying of Christ’s Cross – but who desires to hear these true words of the prophet who speaks for God of the division Jesus brings between sin and salvation?

We embrace sin and yet expect salvation. We break the command of the Lord, and presume impunity. But the Word of the Lord cannot be changed, and will not pass away till every part of every letter has been fulfilled.

Our consciences are marred by self-aggrandizement, by the thought that we ourselves know best and not God or His Sacred Scripture or His Church. And so each man decides for himself what is right.

And so abortion is excused; and more than excused, it is lauded as a good – as are so many other abominations in the sight of God: homosexuality and fornication of all kinds; adultery and divorce; lying and stealing and killing... there is no horror we cannot reason into a good. But the Lord's ways are far above our own, and to His thoughts we shall have a rude awakening, I fear.

What feels good or nice is not necessarily so, my friend. What you think is not ever true. You are far from perfect and prone continually to sin. This you must see or death will remain ever near you.

It is just this manner of self-righteousness from which the Lord has come to deliver you. It is indeed to obedience to the eternal Word of God He would lead you. For there alone is light, for there alone is truth – all that is apart from this light dies; and from those who embrace other than His love, the worm shall never depart.

It is two days before Christmas; and will there be peace, true peace, upon this land on the day of our dear Savior's birth... and on the day of His Second Coming? Are our hearts prepared to meet Him, to receive Him, or are they set rather on things of this earth?

Much has been said of the commercialism of Christmas and the exclusion of Christ from this holy day and time which bears His name – it is so that many would remove even His name from this season of celebration. And the absurdity that is upon this place is indeed unimaginable. Here we have a country of Christians where it is become illegal or at least improper to speak of the Lord Himself.

What does Jesus threaten? Peace, love, truth, compassion...? Which of these should men fear? Is His light of wisdom and understanding to be shunned for the evil it might bring? All that Christ offers is salvation; and by Him no one is forced to enter glory.

Yet the absurdity is deep and seemingly abiding. Perhaps it is not so much the common man who has wrought this reprehensible condition; it is likely the intellectual and media elite, who wield power and influence over minds and hearts... But it must be seen that even the common man is affected by such exclusionary thought and action – that even he is ready to accept the food given him. And so how shall Christ's peace come this Christmas to those who do not know Him, who would pretend He does not exist?

Yes, let there be peace on earth and good will among men. But know that peace will not come and good will is not present when the least among us are slaughtered in the womb by the thousands each day, when men seek to satisfy their own desires and not the desire of God, when they fat themselves on the fruit of the land while others starve, and when they give free reign to their lust. Here can never be peace but only the sword.

Are there good people here? Very likely so. But the country as a whole sins greatly and leads the nations of the world greatly into sin by its export of immorality and the abominations of abortion and birth control and sterilization and the death also that permeates its entertainment: its movies rife with fornication, its music lauding violence and rape and the indignity of men and women alike... What good is any of this? And what should good people do in the face of such iniquity?

Do we stand in opposition of the culture of death pervading this country and the earth at this time; or do we but turn a blind eye and so by our silence grant approval? Or do we embrace what is popular, what is current, what idol now stands before us in the stead of God presuming knowledge of the way to truth, all the while promoting his or her own selfish agenda, guided only by the desire for power and money and the recognition of the masses? Where is the good will, my friend? Where can be the peace?

On a Christmas day it is hard to pick up pen and write; for during this great feast, why should we speak of the sins of men, the sins of this soulless nation? Yet today's Feast of the Holy Innocents seems to beg acknowledgement, calls a voice forth to speak for the unborn.

It is impossible not to think today of the slaughter of the innocents in our day as we commemorate those slaughtered by Herod two thousand years ago. They were indeed innocent victims of the hard heart of man, of his selfish pride, and is it not this same selfishness, this same vain pride, that kills so many each day in this country and around the world?

As the blood mounts up even to our eyes, we wonder what are twenty or thirty lives of infants cruelly taken then in comparison to the thousands destroyed each day now – and yet each one of these twenty or thirty, and every life taken today, is precious in the eyes of God, and their killing a tragic abomination in His sight.

Were one life to be heartlessly destroyed it should be enough for a great outcry... What cause have we today to decry this great horror in our midst!

Rachel is weeping. No doubt. The Lord Himself sheds tears for these little ones. Those who were crucified then in His stead are like those crucified in great number today – and for every soul Jesus bleeds.

The new year is upon us now. The Octave of Christmas is past, though we are still in the season. And as we begin another year, perhaps we might be allowed to hope, to hope that yet new life might come to these shores, that there shall be a distinct turn to the light of truth and the life of virtue.

But it is hard. It is hard to forget the ongoing terror in our midst even as we hope for its end. While so many are killed, while so many are led astray – while such blindness and hardness of heart remains, we cannot forget and must continue to pray.

But the forces of evil shall not extinguish hope in the children of God. Darkness shall never overcome the light. Though we remember the blood as it mounts, yet our hearts are set on the kingdom to come, where shall be no mourning or weeping, where shall be no more death and destruction.

It is not only for the lives of the innocent we cry but for the souls of those who kill them, and the souls of all who participate by ignorance or a life lived in support of death. Be it by contraception or by fornication or promiscuity of any kind – do not those who practice these contribute to our national sin? But let none lose heart to judgment; we must pray that all be washed clean.

This writing seems to lack order, seems to be without organization, and so it does not seem like a book at all, scattered as it is, though on a theme.

I do not know why. Usually by this time, usually within a few pages of writing, if not before, what I compose takes a defined shape, some particular form. Though it may start from nothing (nothing but an idea, a word, perhaps a title), as everything that comes from God does, and so be amorphous at its conception, it is, as I say, usually not long before the writing becomes a discernable “book”.

Here each page is unto itself, a separate entry on a specific point, but beyond that there is no form – not even chapters to number. Why? I can’t help but wonder.

Is there something about the subject matter that leads to this rather scattered, unconnected, unintegrated “form”? Or is the problem within me; do I fail to find the order the Lord would have the work take? Or is this really no work at all, not worthy of any kind of publication, even to myself?

If we assume that this is to be a book, is to be a writing with some redemptive value, which could be catalogued beside others; and if I am given the benefit of the doubt as not being any more ignorant in composition than at any other time – then what could there be about this nation that leads a book on its sins to take such an undefined structure?

The answer must appear self-explanatory, present in the question itself. If the book is a reflection of this nation and the book is scattered and unorganized – each page an entity to itself but with little or no coordination with the others – then the nation must be as the book.

And is this not a country of individuals, of those whose concern is greatly for themselves and little for any other? Is this not whence pride comes, from doing what seems right in one's own eyes, what will benefit oneself – looking out for #1, as they say – and considering not how one's actions or ideas affect those around one's little kingdom?

Here is selfishness. Here is greed. Here is pride. In the preoccupation with oneself to the exclusion of others is this blindness of the eye that condemns the soul. Yet many ask why, thinking themselves generous and kind – proving thus the blindness besetting their eyes.

It is like a disease afflicting the American, this self-centered independence and indifference; and it destroys the family; destroys the neighborhood, the community; destroys the Church and man's relationship with God... all else pales and dies in this prideful light.

Is there any wonder there are so many abortions, so much drug abuse, so much pornography... so much divorce of soul and body, bringing the death of the soul? Is it not the freedom we profess as heartless individuals that kills us as individuals and a nation as a whole?

What shall save such an unruly mob following gods not their own? How shall they be gathered into the fold of the only Son? Is it not He whom they have blessed? Is it not He who should have their heart's allegiance? And yet do they not freely stray to gods that are not gods, to the works of human hands and minds?

Europe has descended remarkably into the great abyss. This land that was once the bastion of Christendom, that once was so thoroughly strengthened by worship of the true God, has turned resolutely from following His ways, and so finds itself on the precipice of utter destruction. And will America follow in its path?

Where once the monks chanted, where once the land was filled with bells ringing out the prayer of the people of God, now there is marriage of homosexuals, now abortion, now the destruction of the embryo for experimentation, now euthanasia and assisted suicide... now in this place the culture of death takes increasing hold.

And America is not far behind, teetering itself on destruction; hanging in the balance is its very existence. Will it follow the land from which many of its inhabitants have come and join in full the orgy of self-righteous, self-induced holocaust... or find the source of its law and return to sanity and common sense in recognition and reverence for the God who has created all men? The answer is not now known, but must come soon.

There may yet come order out of this chaos. This writing might find a form and this country a purpose, other than to gratify itself. Perhaps it might find the Lord.

He is not far from anyone. Very near to all who call upon Him in truth, He lives in the soul of every man, waiting for recognition from His creatures.

There is a light in everyone. And so everyone may come to the light that is not far from him. The Lord is knocking even now at the door of your heart, my brother; open and let Him in.

For if the country as a whole cannot be saved, certainly any man that turns to Him shall. And so, as we pray for this nation to be true, we entreat each one within its borders to call upon the Lord and save his own soul.

In this way let us use our individualism for good. By turning from the stream that flows to destruction, that leads all men to Gehenna, we shall stand alone and mocked – but we are individuals, are we not?

And as far as the inhabitants of the land might stray from truth and goodness and right, as much as they might rebel against the living God, yet the living God is in each one of us, calling us ever to His side.

Listen to His voice, my brother, my sister. It is sure. Hear it above the din... or softly speaking below it, humbly calling to your heart. And though chaos reign around you, yet you will find life with Him.

Yes, in this way we can turn the tables of the devil back upon himself. For if he has preyed upon our individuality, our love for freedom, to bring about the abomination of abortion and others by his perversion of the power to choose with which the Lord has blessed all His creatures, then by that same individuality, by that same freedom in the Spirit of God, let us not fear to stand against the tide of death he has so succeeded in bringing to pass in our midst. Thus will Satan be defeated, and thus will our freedom find fulfillment in the Lord our God.

What we have, we must use, brothers and sisters, and we must use for right. We cannot deny the talents, the qualities wrought into our culture, into our very persons, so let us indeed use them for good.

If there are those who would choose to be alone, let them be monks and nuns, and not fornicators indulging their fleshly desires. If marriage be our call, let us not be afraid to bear the full weight the world would press upon us in the sacrifice this state requires. Are we not man enough or woman enough? Let us die for our children that they might live, rather than dying ourselves by our own whim and fancy.

Are we not revolutionaries? Then let us see that our world revolve around the Son of God in truth and goodness and love.

Epilogue

Pride. Pride is a terrible sin. It so blinds the eyes that only by groping, only as through thick darkness, can the soul see its sin and so be saved. Nothing is more deadly than pride.

Yet pride is held up by this nation as a great good – and so, how dangerous is the situation in which we find ourselves. How afflicted we are, and yet think ourselves healthy and thriving.

This work has ended suddenly, without my knowing it. I thought it would be much longer. But it is over. From this may we learn... in an instant all will disappear.

I will conclude with a quote from Mother Teresa, who called the United States “the poorest country in the world.”

May God help us and Our Lady pray for us.